(d) 1. The general norm is one ASHA for 1000 population. In tribal, hilly, desert areas the norms could be relaxed to one ASHA per habitation, depending on her workload.

2. Guide lines issued to states for criteria for selection of ASHA are as under:

(i) ASHA must be primarily a woman resident of the village 'Married/ Widow/Divorced' and preferably in the age group of 25 to 45 years.

(ii) ASHA should have effective communication skills, leadership qualities and be able to reach out to the community. She should be literate woman with formal education up to eight class.

(iii) Adequate representation from disadvantaged population groups should be ensured to serve such groups better.

3. In the state of Madhya Pradesh ASHA is selected on the basis of education up to 8th class (Relaxable to class 5th), permanent resident of the village for which she is selected. Age group of ASHA is 25—45 years and is Married/Separated/Divorcee.

Medicinal plant promotion measures

†2808. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that thousands of medicinal plants of various species are found in Himalayan and hilly areas in the country;

(b) whether Government are taking any concrete steps for the proper use of these medicinal plants;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have any proposal to set up a separate Medicinal Plant Board in Darjeeling Himalayan and hilly areas;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) Government has set up Medicinal Plants Board vide Resolution notified on 24th November, 2000. The objectives of establishing the Board is to establish an agency which would be responsible for co-ordination of all matters relating to medicinal plants, including drawing up policies and strategies for conservation, proper harvesting, cost-effective cultivation, research and development, processing, marketing of raw material in order to protect, sustain and develop this sector. The Board has implemented schemes for various promotional activities including survey, inventorisation, documentation, in/ex-situ conservation, extension activities for increasing awareness, training of growers and collectors, research & development etc. in the field of medicinal plants.

(d) There is no such proposal.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) State Medicinal Plants Board has already been set up in the State of West Bengal to coordinate and implement scheme relating to medicinal plants in the State including the Himalayan and Hilly areas of Darjeeling.

Health spending and GDP

† 2809. DR.MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to spend 3 per cent of gross domestic product on health services in the country during the coming five years;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) whether there is any proposal also of making an increased in budget expenditure regarding health during each coming year to achieve the said target; and

(d) if so, the details of such a proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Yes. Sir, The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) stipulates *inter-alia* that

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.